

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9595

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, TH

SUBJECT: LABOR DISPUTES UNRESOLVED

REF: A) BANGKOK 4924 B) BANGKOK 3354

1. THAILAND'S LABOR PROBLEMS CONTINUE. NONE OF THE STRIKES REPORTED IN REFTEL A HAVE BEEN RESOLVED. IN ADDITION, EMPLOYEES OF THE FREIGHT DIVISION OF THE EXPRESS TRANSPORT ORGANIZATION (ETO) HAVE GONE ON STRIKE PROTESTING MANAGEMENT CONDUCT, INCLUDING UNSPECIFIED CORRUPT PRACTICES AND EFFORTS TO DISMISS UNION MEMBERS. NO SPECIFIC WAGE DEMANDS ARE INVOLVED IN THE PROTEST.

2. AFTER CONDUCTING EXPERIMENTS IN SEVERAL PROVINCES OF CENTRAL THAILAND CONFEDERATION OF LABOR UNIONS OF THAILAND (CLUT) LEADERS ARE READY TO ACCEDE TO AN INCREASE IN THE PRICE OF MILLED RICE. CLUT PRESIDENT PHAISAN THAWATCHAINAN TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS THAT CLUT WOULD AGREE TO AN INCREASE TO SIXTY BAHT PER TANGK (15 KILOS). CLUT REPRESENTATIVES HAVE PURCHASED PADDY RICE IN SEVERAL CENTRAL PROVINCES AND HAD IT MILLED IN VARIOUS RICE MILLS. ON THE AVERAGE ONE TON OF PADDY PRODUCED 450 KILOS OF MILLED RICE, MORE THAN THE GOVERNMENT'S CLAIM OF ONLY 390 KILOS BUT FAR LESS THAN CLUT'S INITIAL FIGURE OF 690 KILOS. PHAISAN, NOTING THAT 5 PERCENT RICE IS ALREADY SELLING FOR 75 BAHT PER TANG IN
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BANGKOK OPEN MARKETS ASKED "WHAT'S THE USE?" (REFTEL B)

3. A DELEGATION, WHICH INCLUDED MEMBERS OF ORGANIZED LABOR, STUDENT GROUPS AND THE RESOURCE PROTECTION FRONT, HAS RETURNED FROM A FACT FINDING TRIP TO THE TIN MINING AREA NEAR PHUKET. THEIR INITIAL REPORT IS QUITE RESTRAINED STATING ONLY THAT THERE IS NO ILLEGAL MINING TAKING PLACE. BASED ON THAT REMARK, THE REST OF THEIR REPORT WILL BE VIEWED WITH CONSIDERABLE SKEPTICISM.

WHITEHOUSE

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